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ON THE
OMNISCIENCE
OF THE
SUPREME BEING,
A
POETICAL ESSAY.

By CHRISTOPHER SMART, M.A.
Of Pembroke-Hall in the University of Cambridge.

THE SECOND EDITION.

CAMBRIDGE,

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M.DCC.LVI.

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TO
THE MOST REVEREND HIS GRACE,
THE
LORD ARCH-BISHOP
OF
CANTERBURY;

THIS POETICAL ESSAY
ON
The Omniscience of the Supreme Being,

Is with all humility Inscribed,

By HIS GRACE'S

most dutiful

most obliged

and most obedient

humble Servant

C. SMART.

TO
THE MOST REVEREND HIS GRACE
THE
LORD ARCH-BISHOP
OF
CANTEBURY;

THIS POETICAL ESSAY
ON
The Omnipotence of the Supreme Being.

Is with all
By His



most dutiful
most obliged
and most obedient
humble servant

G. SMART.

A Clause of Mr. SEATON's Will,

Dated Oct. 8. 1738.

I Give my Kislisbury Estate to the University of Cambridge for ever: the Rents of which shall be disposed of yearly by the Vice-Chancellor for the time being, as he the Vice-Chancellor, the Master of Clare-Hall, and the Greek Professor for the time being, or any two of them shall agree. Which three persons aforesaid shall give out a Subject, which Subject shall for the first Year be one or other of the Perfections or Attributes of the Supreme Being, and so the succeeding Years, till the Subject is exhausted; and afterwards the Subject shall be either Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, Purity of heart, &c. or whatever else may be judged by the Vice-Chancellor, Master of Clare-Hall, and Greek Professor to be most conducive to the honour of the Supreme Being and recommendation of Virtue. And they shall yearly dispose of the Rent of the above Estate to that Master of Arts, whose Poem on the Subject given shall be best approved by them. Which Poem I ordain to be always in English, and to be printed; the expence of which shall be deducted out of the product of the Estate, and the residue given as a reward for the Composer of the Poem, or Ode, or Copy of Verses.

WE the underwritten, do assign Mr. SEATON's Reward to C. SMART, M.A. for his Poem on *The Omniscience of the Supreme Being*, and direct the said Poem to be printed, according to the tenor of the Will.

November 2. 1752.

J. Wilcox Vice-Chancellor.

T. Francklin Greek Professor.

ON THE
OMNISCIENCE
OF THE
SUPREME BEING.

ARISE, divine Urania, with new strains
To hymn thy God, and thou, immortal Fame,
Arise, and blow thy everlasting trump.
All glory to th' Omniscient, and praise,
And pow'r, and domination in the height!
And thou, cherubic Gratitude, whose voice
To pious ears sounds silverly so sweet,
Come with thy precious incense, bring thy gifts,

And

6 THE OMNISCIENCE OF

And with thy choicest stores the altar crown.
Thou too, my Heart, whom he, and he alone
Who all things knows, can know, with love replete,
Regenerate, and pure, pour all thyself
A living sacrifice before his throne :
And may th' eternal, high mysterious tree,
That in the center of the arched Heav'ns
Bears the rich fruit of Knowledge, with some branch
Stoop to my humble reach, and bless my toil !

When in my mother's womb conceal'd I lay
A senseless embryo, then my soul thou knewst,
Knewst all her future workings, every thought,
And every faint idea yet unform'd.
When up the imperceptible ascent
Of growing years, led by thy hand, I rose,
Perception's gradual light, that ever dawns
Insensibly to day, thou didst vouchsafe,
And taught me by that reason thou inspir'dst,
That what of knowledge in my mind was low,
Imperfect,

Imperfect, incorrect — in Thee is wondrous,
Uncircumscrib'd, unsearchably profound,
And estimable solely by itself.

What is that secret pow'r, that guides the brutes,
Which Ignorance calls Instinct? 'Tis from Thee,
It is the operation of thine hands
Immediate, instantaneous; 'tis thy wisdom,
That glorious shines transparent thro' thy works.
Who taught the Pye, or who forwarn'd the Jay
To shun the deadly nightshade? tho' the cherry
Boasts not a glossier hue, nor does the plumb
Lure with more seeming sweets the amorous eye,
Yet will not the sagacious birds, decoy'd
By fair appearance, touch the noxious fruit.
They know to taste is fatal, whence alarm'd
Swift on the winnowing winds they work their way.
Go to, proud reas'ner philosophic Man,
Hast thou such prudence, thou such knowledge? — No.
Full many a race has fell into the snare

Of

Of meretricious looks, of pleasing surface,
And oft in desert isles the famish'd pilgrim
By forms of fruit, and luscious taste beguil'd,
Like his forefather Adam, eats and dies.
For why? his wisdom on the leaden feet
Of slow experience, dully tedious, creeps,
And comes, like vengeance, after long delay.

The venerable Sage, that nightly trims
The learned lamp, t' investigate the pow'rs
Of plants medicinal, the earth, the air,
And the dark regions of the fossil world,
Grows old in following, what he ne'er shall find;
Studious in vain! till haply, at the last
He spies a mist, then shapes it into mountains,
And baseless fabrics from conjecture builds.
While the domestic animal, that guards
At midnight hours his threshold, if oppress'd
By sudden sickness, at his master's feet
Begs not that aid his services might claim,

But

But is his own physician, knows the case,
 And from th' emetic herbage works his cure.
 Hark from afar the * feather'd matron screams,
 And all her brood alarms, the docile crew
 Accept the signal one and all, expert
 In th' art of nature and unlearn'd deceit:
 Along the fod, in counterfeited death,
 Mute, motionless they lie, full well appriz'd,
 That the rapacious adversary's near.
 But who inform'd her of th' approaching danger,
 Who taught the cautious mother, that the hawk
 Was hatcht her foe, and liv'd by her destruction?
 Her own prophetic soul is active in her,
 And more than human providence her guard.
 When Philomela, e'er the cold domain
 Of cripled winter gins to advance, prepares
 Her annual flight, and in some poplar shade
 Takes her melodious leave, who then's her pilot?

* The Hen Turkey.

Who points her passage thro' the pathless void
 To realms from us remote, to us unknown?
 Her science is the science of her God:
 Not the magnetic index to the North
 E'er ascertains her course, nor buoy, nor beacon.
 She heav'n-taught voyager, that sails in air,
 Courts nor coy West nor East, but instant knows
 What * Newton, or not sought, or sought in vain.

Illustrious name, irrefragable proof
 Of man's vast genius, and the soaring soul
 Yet what wert thou to him, who knew his works,
 Before creation form'd them, long before
 He measur'd in the hollow of his hand
 Th' exulting ocean, and the highest Heav'ns
 He comprehended with a span, and weigh'd
 The mighty mountains in his golden Scales:
 Who shone supreme, who was himself the light,
 E'er yet Refraction learn'd her skill to paint,

* The Longitude.

And

And bend ~~athwart~~ the clouds her beauteous bow.

When Knowledge at her father's dread command
 Resign'd to Israel's king her golden key,
 Oh to have join'd the frequent auditors
 In wonder and delight, that whilom heard
 Great Solomon descanting on the brutes.
 Oh how, sublimely glorious to apply
 To God's own honour, and good will to man,
 That wisdom he alone of men possess'd
 In plenitude so rich, and scope so rare.
 How did he rouse the pamper'd silken sons
 Of bloated ease, by placing to their view
 The sage industrious ant, the wisest insect,
 And best oeconomist of all the field!
 Tho' she presumes not by the solar orb
 To measure times and seasons, nor consults
 Chaldean calculations, for a guide;
 Yet conscious that December's on the march
 Pointing with icie hand to want and woe,

She waits his dire approach, and undismay'd
 Receives him as a welcome guest, prepar'd
 Against the churlish winter's fiercest blow.
 For when, as yet the favourable Sun
 Gives to the genial earth th' enlivening ray,
 Not the poor suffering slave, that hourly toils
 To rive the groaning earth for ill-fought gold,
 Endures such trouble, such fatigue, as she;
 While all her subterraneous avenues,
 And storm-proof cells with management most meet
 And unexampled housewifry she forms:
 Then to the field she hies, and on her back,
 Burden immense! she bears the cumbrous corn.
 Then many a weary step, and many a strain,
 And many a grievous groan subdued, at length
 Up the huge hill she hardly heaves it home:
 Nor rests she here her providence, but nips
 With subtle tooth the grain, left from her garner
 In mischievous fertility it steal,

And

And back to day-light vegetate its way.
 Go to the Ant, thou sluggard, learn to live,
 And by her wary ways reform thine own.
 But, if thy deaden'd sense, and listless thought
 More glaring evidence demand; behold,
 Where yon pellucid populous hive presents
 A yet uncopied model to the world!
 There Machiavel in the reflecting glass
 May read himself a fool. The Chemist there
 May with astonishment invidious view
 His toils outdone by each plebeian Bee,
 Who, at the royal mandate, on the wing
 From various herbs, and from discordant flow'rs
 A perfect harmony of sweets compounds.

Avaunt Conceit, Ambition take thy flight
 Back to the Prince of vanity and air!
 Oh 'tis a thought of energy most piercing,
 Form'd to make pride grow humble; form'd to force
 Its weight on the reluctant mind, and give her

A true but irksome image of herself.
Woful vicissitude! when Man, fall'n Man,
Who first from Heav'n from gracious God himself
Learn'd knowledge of the Brutes, must know by Brutes
Instructed and reproach'd, the scale of being;
By slow degrees from lowly steps ascend,
And trace Omniscience upwards to its spring!
Yet murmur not, but praise — for tho' we stand
Of many a Godlike privilege amer'd
By Adam's dire transgression, tho' no more
Is paradise our home, but o'er the portal
Hangs in terrific pomp the burning blade;
Still with ten thousand beauties blooms the Earth
With pleasures populous, and with riches crown'd,
Still is there scope for wonder and for love
Ev'n to their last exertion — show'rs of blessings
Far more than human virtue can deserve,
Or hope expect, or gratitude return.
Then, O ye People, O ye Sons of men,

What-

Whatever be the colour of your lives,
 Whatever portion of itself his Wisdom
 Shall deign t' allow, still patiently abide,
 And praise him more and more; nor cease to chant
 ALL GLORY TO TH' OMNISCIENT, AND PRAISE,
 AND POW'R, AND DOMINATION IN THE HEIGHT!
And thou, cherubic Gratitude, whose voice
To pious ears sounds silverly so sweet,
Come with thy precious incense, bring thy gifts,
And with thy choicest stores the altar crown.

ΤΩ ΘΕΩ ΔΟΞΑ.

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and sold by Mr. Newbery.**

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